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Intelligence Network Reviewed In Move to Reduce Duplication

Group Named by Johnson Will Survey Activities of State Department and Military Agents, as Well as C.I.A.

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 7 — A study of the worldwide activities of United States intelligence agencies has been undertaken by a special Presidential task force. Its goal is to bring about greater efficiency and coordination.

The group is composed of Frederick E. Nolting Jr., a Foreign Service officer and former Ambassador to South Vietnam; Maj. Gen. John M. Reynolds of the Air Force, who has served since 1961 as vice director of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and John A. Bross, deputy to the director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

The task force is functioning as a part of the immediate staff of John A. McCone, who, in his capacity of director of central intelligence, is responsible for coordinating the work of the nation's intelligence community as a whole.

The intelligence community is made up of the three main intelligence components of the United States Government: the Central Intelligence Agency, the Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the State Department, and the Defense Intelligence Agency plus the intelligence sections of each of the three military services.

Coordinates All Agencies

Mr. McCone holds the post of director of the Central Intelligence Agency, but the law as well as specific directives of the National Security Council and the President have vested in him the simultaneous function of director of the intelligence community.

His responsibility is to coordinate the activities of all the elements in the intelligence community.

The current study has thus been ordered to provide President Johnson and Mr. McCone with specific recommendations as to how best the work of all the agencies can be meshed together for greater efficiency and a more complete worldwide coverage.

On the task force, Ambassador Nolting is representing the State Department, General Reynolds the Defense Department and Mr. Bross the Central Intelligence Agency.

The group expects to draw up recommendations within four or five months. It is not intended as a permanent body.

The nation's overall intelligence effort is under continuous review by the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, which was established by President Kennedy in May, 1961, following the failure of the rebel invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs. The board is now headed by Clark M. Clifford, who last year succeeded Dr. James R. Killian Jr. of the chairman.

Ordered by Kennedy

The new task force was called for by President Kennedy shortly before his death. Its members were named by President Johnson last month.

Administration sources said today that no specific situation led to the appointment of the panel, although it was felt that the time had come to take a new look at the operational relationship of the various autonomous intelligence agencies.

While in theory the different agencies pursue separate objectives, a considerable amount of overlapping, and duplication in field assignment is inevitable. Much of it, it is felt here, can be eliminated.

Although under a Presidential directive the Ambassador is the senior United States official in each foreign country, in practice there frequently occurs an overlapping of political reporting by C.I.A. representatives, State Department officials and the military attachés.

On occasion, the degree of coordination is determined by the personal relationships among the representatives of the three groups, although final evaluation and coordination takes place in Washington.

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Evaluation Disagree

In other instances, coordination in the field is virtually impossible because of the special secret assignments involved.

There have been deep disagreements at times among State Department, C.I.A. and military agents as to the significance of developments and the policies necessary to deal with them.

This was notably true during the crisis in South Vietnam preceding the ouster of the regime headed by the Ngo family.

For months there was a running dispute involving the State Department, the C.I.A. and the military as to the viability of the regime and the success or failure of the war against the Viet Cong guerrillas.

The White House was flooded with contradictory information and recommendations on what was happening and what to do. Often it was hard to tell whether policies proposed by the departments were intended to confirm intelligence from the field or whether the information was used to justify the recommended policies.

Though officials insisted that the study of the intelligence community was based on a general need to streamline over-all operations, some sources acknowledged that the Vietnam situation might well have inspired President Kennedy's decision to order the review.

It is also known that there are frequent differences in evaluation of various aspects of the Cuban situation among the three main elements of the intelligence community.

There is no desire in the Administration to impose uniformity of views on the intelligence groups, but the hope is that some overlapping of functions can be averted.

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